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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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No. 9

Food Consumption Increase Breaks 5-Year Record. Americans are expected to eat more food per person in 1964 than in 1963. A one percent gain is indicated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's the largest food consumption increase in five years. Beef and poultry account for most of the gain. Americans are also eating more fresh citrus fruit, other fresh fruits--mostly apples--and frozen vegetables. Food expenditures for the first six months in 1964 are also up--about 4 percent over the same period in 1963, USDA reports. And they're expected to run about the same for the rest of the year. While consumers are buying more food, they're spending only about 18-1/2 percent of their take-home pay for food in 1964. That's a smaller percent than ever before. In 1963 they spent 20 percent; 15 years ago they spent 26 percent. The British spend 30 percent, and the Russians spend about half of their take-home pay for food.

Cause for Concern. Half of the teen-age girls in the U.S. have diets lacking in some essential nutrients. This nutrition gap not only spells possible health danger for the girls, but for the many babies born to teen-age mothers, U.S. Department of Agriculture nutritionists point out. And today one out of every four women bearing her first child is under 20. Babies born to undernourished teen-agers may be premature, may have congenital defects, and may lack adequate nutritional reserves to protect themselves through birth and the first months of life.

"Baited" Traps Air Dropped To Catch Tree Pests. Small, feather-weight traps, baited with a substance which attracts the male gypsy moth, are being air-dropped in New Jersey and New York to test their effectiveness in controlling this forest, fruit, and shade-tree pest. U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers are placing similar traps by hand in the Cape Cod area. The tree-damaging gypsy moth has been spreading steadily in recent years until it now infests New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, as well as all the New England States. This is the first attempt to use traps to control the infestations.



NEW PRODUCTS

Applesauce In An Instant. Just add hot water to the free-flowing apple granules and you have applesauce ready to serve. Instant applesauce has several advantages. It's easy to prepare, it keeps without refrigeration, weighs only about 1/5 as much as canned applesauce, and has the same flavor as if made from fresh apples. It's made from apple pieces dehydrated by a new explosion puffing process developed by USDA researchers, and already used successfully with blueberries, apples, potatoes, carrots, beets, turnips, and sweetpotatoes. The dehydrated pieces can be cooked in 1/5 to 1/10 of the time usually required for dehydrated fruits and vegetables. Without being crushed, the puffed apple pieces can be used as pie filling, or reconstituted and served as a compote. Potential producers, food processors, and institutional users may get information from SERVICE Editor, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

New Turpentine Use in Synthetic Rubber. An inexpensive turpentine derivative may be used to produce the important new synthetic rubber called ETP, U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers report. ETP is highly resistant to oils and the atmospheric ozone gas which deteriorates natural and most synthetic rubber. Its first major markets likely will be for auto floor mats, weather stripping, gaskets, and electrical insulation. Later it may be widely used for tires. Aim of USDA researchers is to develop new uses for agricultural crops.

RECREATION

Farm Ponds Important In Recreation Picture. More than half of the 1.3 million farm ponds and conservation pools built on private land are stocked with fish, and nearly 261,000 are open for public use on a fee or free basis, a state by state study by USDA conservationists shows. Many more ponds and conservation pools not listed as open are used for fishing by invitation and by permission of the owner. Approximately 6,500 are leased to clubs or other organized groups. More than 43,000 are equipped with recreational facilities such as fishing docks, lighting, and picnic facilities.

HOME MANAGEMENT

Do's For Dishwashers. Whether or not your automatic dishwasher lives up to your expectations depends a lot on the way you use it, USDA household equipment specialists report. For best results: (1) Be sure your hot water tank heats water for your dishwasher at least as hot as 140 degrees Fahrenheit; (2) Load your dishwasher so the dishwashing compound can reach the soiled surface of everything inside; (3) Never use a laundry detergent in your dishwasher or a detergent you'd use for washing dishes by hand. The dishwasher's speed will create such a mountain of suds it may cause flooding. It could even damage the dishwasher. Try several of the compounds on the market to find the one best suited to your local water conditions. Then keep the compound container tightly closed. It's easily affected by moisture, and deteriorates rapidly unless the container is air tight.

SMART SHOPPER

Search For the Solidly Frozen. To get the highest quality frozen foods, buy only the packages that feel solid, USDA food specialists suggest. Avoid packages that feel soft, or are stained. This indicates they have started to thaw. And refreezing after thawing lowers the quality.

Wise Buys for September. When you shop, keep in mind the foods which are expected to be plentiful in September--beef, Italian prunes (or purple plums), broiler-fryers, and late summer vegetables such as tomatoes, lettuce, sweet corn, green beans, cabbage and onions. They'll be high in quality and expected to be favorably priced. Even though beef production has declined somewhat below the records set earlier this year, beef will continue in heavier supply than a year ago.

Three Different Meals From One Steak. Since beef continues to be plentiful, consider serving it often. And since porterhouse steaks have three separate sections, USDA family economists say it's possible to have three quite different meals from one steak. Buy one per person, and for the first meal, cut off the thin piece of flank on the end. Have your butcher make it into ground beef patties. For the second meal you can serve filet mignon by removing the tenderloin--the small oval muscle on the side of the blade bone. For the third meal you have the very desirable strip loin steak.

Price Doesn't Measure Nutrition. The price you pay per pound of meat is not necessarily a measure of its nutritive value, USDA nutritionists say. The cheaper cuts and grades of lean meat can be just as full of food value as the highest-priced ones. The protein in one is just as valuable as in the other. The main difference is that cheaper cuts require greater skill in cooking and seasoning.

COMMUNITY

Rural Consumers to Save \$2.5 Million. Rate reductions in fiscal 1964 will save rural consumers more than \$2.5 million annually on their electric bills in 111 of the rural electric systems financed by USDA Rural Electrification Administration loans. One out of every ten systems financed by REA cut rates during the year, the highest proportion on record for any 12-month period. Only 9 of the 1,000 electric borrowers had to raise rates. The number of reductions has been increasing in recent years--from 31 in fiscal 1962, and 77 in 1963.

271 Rural Communities Get Water Systems. Loans totaling \$743 million to help 1.4 million people who could not get credit elsewhere were made by USDA's Farmers Home Administration in fiscal 1964. This is an increase of 141 percent above the 1960 level. Greatest increase in loans was to small communities for construction of water distribution systems. In all, 271 rural communities received loans to finance improvement in existing water systems or to build their first water system. For loan details, send post card for "Loans to Rural Groups--PA-560" to Farmers Home Administration, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Your Child's School Lunch--and You. In the coming school year, 70,000 public and non-profit private schools will be serving hot, nutritious lunches to children through the National School Lunch Program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If your child attends a participating school, he can get one of the world's best bargains in good eating--a well-balanced meal that meets 1/3 to 1/2 of his daily nutritive requirements for about 25 cents. To take part in the program, the schools must serve lunches free or at reduced price to children unable to pay the full price. The program must operate on a non-profit basis. Some schools, however, are currently unable to participate because they lack the necessary kitchen and serving facilities. Community groups interested in community improvement projects might find out what their schools need for participation, and help them secure it. For details, write SERVICE Editor, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

More and Better Food For More People. Congress has now authorized gradual expansion of the Food Stamp program, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been operating on a pilot basis for three years. This will permit low-income families in more areas to have better diets. Low-income families certified as eligible by State and local welfare agencies will use the money they normally spend for food to buy Federal food coupons. In return, they will get coupons which are worth more. They will spend their coupons just like money at authorized retail stores for any U.S. produced food. Participation by low-income families and stores is voluntary. The families contribute an average of \$6 toward every \$10 worth of coupons they get. Families in 40 counties and 3 major U.S. cities participated in the pilot projects.

FOOD FACTS

Pointers for Perfect Pickles. If you're making pickles at home, USDA food specialists recommend you heat process the pickles right in the jars for best flavor, color and texture, and to reduce the danger of spoilage. Best procedures for successful pickling, plus recipes, are given in the new publication, "Making Pickles and Relishes At Home--HG-92". For a single copy, send post card to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

PLANTS AND INSECTS

Need a New Lawn? Renovate This Fall. If there's desirable grass on less than 50 percent of your lawn, it's usually best to get rid of all the grass, prepare a new seedbed, and replant, U.S. Department of Agriculture plant specialists suggest. And early fall is the best time. Here's how: Get rid of all weeds, leaves, and undesirable grass by mowing closely, raking, then applying a chemical weed killer. Rake vigorously or cultivate to loosen the surface of the soil. This forms a rough seedbed for plants. Fertilize, lime, and plant the same way you would a new lawn. For a single copy of "Better Lawns--HG-51," send post card to Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

CONSERVATION

Planes, Helicopters Vital in Forests. To protect and manage your National Forest recreation areas, timber, and other natural resources, airplanes and helicopters flew a total of 55,758 hours in 1963. Seventy percent of the flight time was to fight forest fires, reports the U.S. Department of Agriculture which administers your National Forests. Smokejumpers made some 2,500 jumps during the year. An average of about 12,500 forest fires break out each year--most due to human carelessness. Reports for fiscal 1964 show timber cut from the National Forests hit an all-time high of 10.9 billion board feet--enough to build an 8-foot boardwalk to the moon. Timber sales are carefully planned and supervised to maintain a sustained yield, but at the same time to provide maximum assistance to industries depending on National Forest timber supplies.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer, rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250